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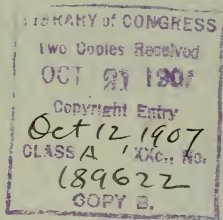
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The Fallacy of the Wide-Open Town

WILLIAM R. SCOTT

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B. J. Billings, Paducah, Ky.

The Fallacy of the Wide-Open Town

If a committee of representative business men, convinced that an increase in population would be the greatest thing for Paducah's industrial welfare, should appear before the general council and ask that an ordinance be passed legalizing immorality as the best means to accomplish that end, what would be the general idea about their action?

Suppose their arguments in favor of such an ordinance ran like this: Where there is the greatest immorality, there is the greatest number of child-births; hence, to take the quickest step to increase Paducah's population, an ordinance legalizing immorality would be sane and efficient.

No one denies that an increase in population would be desirable. But is there doubt in any person's mind as to what answer would be made by the council, or the answer that would swell from almost every throat?

"You are fools, your ideas of industrial economy are false, and your morals are utterly unbalanced," would be the decisive rebuff to such a committee.

But their argument, that immorality by increasing child-birth, would increase the population, has not been answered. To dismiss a person with the declaration that he is unbalanced, does not in any sense answer his attitude.

The first effect of general immorality would be an increase in population. Childbirths would be

more frequent. But the whole operation of such an idea would be what? At one time in Paris, it is estimated that every third birth was illegal. That is immorality on a scale greater than any modern nation has known and scarcely better than the nations of antiquity. Did Paris' population increase rapidly under this general immorality? On the contrary, population decreased rapidly.

The city was kept in a vital condition only through the influx of fresh blood from the rural districts. Studied at close range, it is seen that where illegal births are frequent, the hardihood of the race deteriorates rapidly. The children so born are weaklings, they are more susceptible to disease, they are less capable of surviving in the struggle for existence. Hence, the death rate is greater in an immoral race because immorality brings about a deterioration in the physique, which makes epidemics more violent and reduces the vitality of the population to the point where they are killed off in the process we call survival of the fittest.

It is evident then, that to stimulate general immorality in Paducah would result in the birth of children incapable of surviving and the final effect would be that instead of an increase in population, there would be a sharp decrease.

This committee of representative business men might have believed sincerely, the idea they presented. What would their attitude, which heart and reason show is false, be termed? The idea would be said to be fallacious. An idea which on its face appears reasonable, but when analyzed is false, is fallacious.

This booklet is an attempt to show that the

whisky business is fallacious. Since the most prominent argument brought in favor of this business is that it helps the city industrially, in other words, "makes the town," this booklet is an attempt to show that, analyzed, their chief argument is fallacious. If it can demonstrate this, the whisky business will sink to the same level as the idea just analyzed.

Public Policy

Statesmanship of the highest order, is that which keeps the vitality of the people fresh and strong, by constantly agitating the common principles of morality.

Honesty and morality are essential both in the individual and the nation or community, to the highest degree of productivity of wealth. For where these are lacking, the operation of the individual is not to produce wealth, but to transfer wealth already accumulated, from other members of society, to himself, without giving anything in return. It is on this principle that gambling is condemned; the burglar is a non-producing citizen from the same reason; and those members of society who live by catering to the weaknesses in humanity, by encouraging those weaknesses and supplying the facilities for their satisfaction, are, in addition to being non-productive of wealth, the greatest force at work in the community towards destroying wealth. This is true, both because the immediate effect of their operations is to consume without producing wealth, and because they go to the vitals of society by tearing down the real producers of wealth.

Farmers know that there is no method of causing nature to yield in a greater proportion than they sow. Because nature does operate on such exact principles of honesty, farmers are the most moral and honest members of society, as a class. The dishonest man in business does not grow wealthy by producing wealth, but by stealing it from others, whether this stealing is direct, or is the result of a

manipulation of conditions; or of taking advantage of the ignorance of others; or of selling products to society that are not worth the prices paid for them. Every time an addition is made to the dishonest members of society, a non-producer is created, and society has another idle member to support.

So that all the efforts made to increase morality and self-control in the citizenship of a community, pay dividends in less law-breaking and in less wealth-wasting. Wealth is wasted only when it is spent in satisfying principles of evil that may be awakened in humanity. Humanity destroys wealth when it spends wealth on base passions which it allows to run riot; and this destruction of wealth increases at a compound rate because the dissipated consumption of wealth tears down the physique of the consumers, rendering them less able to produce.

Sobriety of conduct in the life of the individual citizen causes him to get ahead in wealth; society operates on the same principle, only on a larger scale. If the individual is the best producer of wealth when he conducts himself according to the principles of morality, then real statesmanship would dictate that the community should conduct itself along the same lines as the best means to conserve and produce wealth. For a city to license saloons, is simply dissipation on the scale of a whole community; to permit gambling, or bawdy houses, is for the whole city to dissipate as well as the individual citizen. Whenever a community permits any acknowledged evil to go on unchecked, or worse still, license it in its operations, the destruction of wealth will be as much greater than it is in the individual life, as the city is greater than the individual.

Statesmanship of the lowest order, is that which encourages habits of dissipation in a people. This is done in licensing those lines of business that cater to the weaknesses in humanity, for the sake of revenue. But the palpable disadvantages of those businesses more than outweigh the advantage of revenue, so that when statesmen tolerate them, the real reason is not for revenue, or public gain, but for reasons of graft and private gain. Wealth, it has been shown, not only is destroyed under immoral conditions, but the producing power of a community decreases under the deteriorating influence of dissipation; hence, whenever any person advises the permission of any business that caters to a weakness in humanity, he is advising the line of policy most calculated to destroy the wealth of a community.

EXPLOITING HUMANITY.

No man has the right, and society cannot give him the privilege, to engage in the business of exploiting the weaknesses in humanity for financial or any other kind of remuneration, to himself. Statesmanship recognizes this principle in some of its acts, as, for instance, in not licensing the bawdy house. No man would be licensed to exploit this weakness in humanity, by stimulating immorality and supplying the facilities for its satisfaction. Society also will not license the gambler, recognizing the destructive operation of his business; and all this in the face of the fact that both go on tacitly all over the country. Those evils may always exist, but society recognizes them as such, and has declared eternal war against them by never formally recognizing them,

Society brings in a serious indictment against its intelligence and indeed its sincerity, in following such principles in those cases; for there are other cases where society does not condemn the exploitation of human weaknesses.

At no single point can the whisky business, which society licenses, be distinguished in principle, from the business of the bawdy house or the business of the gambler, which society does not license. All cater to acknowledged weaknesses in humanity for financial remuneration to themselves; all prosper greatest when society is at the lowest state of morals. Each flourishes most when the others flourish.

The consumption of intoxicants has long been a practice in society, but no longer than any of the three exploiting businesses mentioned so that its age as a custom cannot be used to prove that the whisky business is legitimate. The opium trade in China is old and looked at from this distance is universally acknowledged to be destructive of wealth because of the deteriorating effect it has on its consumers; yet, the opium business is not different in principle from the whisky business. We cannot point the finger at China for tolerating this business, this exploitation of a weakness of its people, until America takes its official recognition away from the whisky business. And the recent action of Chinese statesmanship in seeking to lessen this traffic in a weakness of the people of that nation, is an evidence of enlightenment that our own halls of Congress cannot duplicate.

There is a weakness in humanity to use intoxicants, which simply are poisons in liquid form, to excess, and statesmanship in this country, ignoring

that fact, licenses some of the members of society to exploit this weakness. For that reason, the society that refuses to license the bawdy house or the gambler, and as a matter of fact, refuses to license the opium business, reverses itself when it licenses the whisky business.

It hardly seems necessary to argue that the whisky business exploits a weakness in humanity. It can be supposed that the men who profit by the opium business in China, would assert that their business is legitimate; but a look at the effect of either of these businesses in a community, is self-evident proof that they do cater to evil principles. A business is not justified simply because it supplies a product that society wants and will buy. It may be that society wants that product to satisfy awakened principles of evil. But think for a moment on the larger operations of the whisky business.

Some of the highest American business intelligence is engaged in the whisky business. This means that superb mental endowments are being constantly used to devise ways to increase the consumption of their product. Society has licensed them to make as much money as they can at their business and they are going about it vigorously. The more dissipation in the use of their product, they can encourage, the greater their remuneration, hence these great intellects are working to get society as dissipated as possible. If this does not constitute the exploitation of a weakness in humanity, what does?

Despite the fact that the whisky business exploits a weakness in humanity, its directors are admitted into full membership in the commercial brotherhood. Should the bawdy houses organize

and apply for membership in the Commercial Club on the grounds that their business circulates money and keeps the town alive, would they be recognized? Wealth is no less surely destroyed by the whisky business, and the physique and morals of the community are scarcely less damaged by it, yet society discriminates and allows the whisky business on a plane of respectability.

INDUSTRIAL FALLACY EXPLODED.

What made a Louisville commercial body in 1907 ask that the racing season be limited from sixty to fifteen days? The same arguments—that the races brought people to the city who spent money, and that they made money already in the city, circulate—were used in defense of the races that the whisky men use in defense of their business. It was because Louisville business man realized that they did no such thing. The act of looking at a horse race is not immoral and the recreative benefit is valuable; but the gambling that invariably accompanies racing is so destructive of wealth, from some persons getting something for which they give nothing, that Louisville business intelligence saw the fallacy and denounced it. The same principle that condemns the gambling of the race track, condemns the whisky business, for it, too, is a business in which some persons get something for which they give nothing of real value.

Of the indirect evils resulting from licensing the whisky business, immorality and crime are the most conspicuous; for both of these will be infinitely greater under the regime of the licensed saloon. Statesmen who tolerate the licensed whisky business

must be held accountable for all the evil results of it. If they really would like to see crime decrease, and immorality less wanton, why do they not advocate the abolition of this prime cause of both? What is their idea of statesmanship?

A growing class of American citizens believes that true statesmanship consists in discouraging immorality and dishonesty of every kind. Those who believe that intoxicants are an evil and therefore demand that society withdraw its sanction from it, are following this principle. The right and wrong in the argument is found in the general principle, that no man has the right to exploit the weaknesses of his fellowmen; and a minute examination into the economic operations of the whisky business, following, will show that the industrial effects of the business are bad, as would logically follow a moral condemnation.

Taxation always is a hard problem for statesmen. For that reason history shows that they have followed the course of least resistance and have derived revenue by licensing certain members of society to engage in the business of supplying the facilities for satisfying evil appetites in humanity. People will much more readily pay taxes on luxuries than on necessities. And they have never objected to the tax that must be paid on those things, the use of which satisfies a vice. The whisky business affords corrupt statesmen an opportunity for revenue that has done more to keep the public blind to its destructive operation, than any other argument, specious though it may be, that has been advanced in favor of the business. This in the face of the fact that it costs society more to handle the evils of the

business, than any possible revenue that could be derived from it. The public is awakening to this fact. Whisky men may search the world for a single community that has not been benefited by prohibition. On the other hand, the fallacy of the business, industrially, is demonstrated in dry communities in a way that spells the ultimate doom of the business everywhere that American business intelligence has the manhood to acknowledge the truth.

SOCIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD EVIL.

Prohibition naturally does not operate with absolute success. But do the prohibitory laws against immorality, or against gambling or against any kind of dissipation, work absolutely? Where is the statesman who would advocate the licensing of the bawdy house because immorality cannot be stopped? Under prohibition of the whisky business, there will be law-breaking. Yet however great this law-breaking, society has made a distinct advance in moral perception when its attitude toward the business is the same as toward the bawdy house. The same number of blind tigers in a community never will be as bad as the same number of open saloons. Society must set a standard of manhood; whether this standard is reached is another question and requires another battle to be fought. But because there is a prospect of illegal commerce in whisky under prohibition, is entirely aside from the attitude society should take toward the business. The whisky business declares its dividends out of the lives and happiness of those members of society who use its products, and society cannot do otherwise than to outlaw such a business. Stamp the business as an outlaw, and then

governmental machinery will be turned, in principle, against and not for, the business. All other lines of business exist on their merits; the whisky business exists only by the most desperate manipulation of politics.

Southern statesmanship is showing the first serious indication of a desire to solve the negro question, by prohibiting the whisky business. Negroes will be as good as the white examples before them. For the negro to see the white man, and especially the loud-mouthed politician, freely indorsing the saloon, is an example that his nature most readily follows. Hence for the intelligent white population of the south to be willing to forego its possible, though unproven, ability to use whisky in moderation, in order that the weaker negro population may have a good example, is an indication of a real desire to solve the negro problem. The negro problem condensed, is a moral one. Set a high standard of moral conduct in the white race and the negro will follow suit; but let the white race indulge every base appetite itself, and the crime of the south will continue to alienate the two races. The presence of the open saloon in a land peopled by two wholly different races has been a menace that future statesmanship will look back upon in amazement that it was tolerated as long as it was. On the other hand, the increase in industrial efficiency from prohibition will in itself sustain the movement.

Stupendous resources are involved in the whisky business, and it is the colossal nature of the business that causes many business men to hesitate about indorsing the proposition to abolish it. It is true that the money invested in the facilities of production

and distribution of the commodity will be either lost or greatly depressed in value if prohibitory legislation is passed. But what will be the loss to society if the business is continued? No matter what is invested in the business, it, like all other investments, depends upon what the public contributes to it through the use of its commodity, to be successful, and society contributes more liberally in proportion, to this business than any other, except of a similar nature. In addition to paying enough to the business to keep up the interest and in the shortest time to replace the original capital invested, society somewhat cheerfully pays for all the results of an excessive use of the commodity. An augmented police force takes care of the crime and criminals that are stimulated by whisky; asylums and poorhouses shelter the unfortunate persons who use it to a logical conclusion; but as yet political economy has not invested any money in alleviating the misery of persons dependent upon the persons who use it to excess. Juvenile courts at a considerable cost to the state have been found beneficial in the handling of children who are reared by delinquent parents, and through a liberal use of funds, society may devise other methods of binding up the frazzled ends of humanity. But why such roundabout methods. True statesmanship would dictate that the cause needs investigating, and the cause in an alarming degree, is whisky. Public policy demands that the whisky business should be prohibited, but statesmen with private ends unfortunately are the directors of public policy. But the people will not live long in the face of a lie.

Economic Operation

As a principle by which every business can be tested to see whether it is legitimate, this can be stated: When the transaction is completed, are both parties to it, the buyer and the seller, equally well off? Has the buyer received for his money a fair value, and has the seller received a just price?

When a man buys a suit of clothes, he thinks that he has made a good exchange for his money; and the dealer thinks he has exchanged his suit for a fair price. In this transaction, both have increased in wealth because each received something that he thought more valuable than he gave. The dealer would rather have the money than the suit, and the buyer would rather have the suit than the money. Is there any dispute as to the legitimacy of this transaction?

Now here is one of the peculiar features of the whisky business.

Men never think of getting into an argument over the legitimacy of the clothing business, or the dry goods business, or the flower pot manufacturing business, but there is now and always has been a considerable dispute over the legitimacy of the whisky business. And the term, whisky business, includes any form of intoxicants. If, as the whisky men assert, their business is the life of the city, why is a large portion of the population continually disputing their assertions? Why is not the legitimacy of the whisky business as apparent as that of the shoe business, and why do not men as generally agree that it is? In this division of opinion is found the

first indictment against the whisky business, for on one side are arrayed those disinterested persons who note the destructive influence of the whisky business; while on the other side are arrayed all those who profit directly or indirectly by the business.

Apply the test laid down. In a transaction where the buyer receives whisky and the seller receives money, are both parties to it equally well off? Has the buyer received a fair value, and has the seller received a just price? To answer this question requires that another principle of business be stated.

What constitutes a fair value? It is something which, when it has been used, leaves the consumer better off than before it was used. The man who bought the suit of clothes is better off financially after its purchase, than before, because he received something he needed more than what he gave. The dealer is better off because he received something more valuable than he gave. Is that true of the transaction where the buyer receives whisky and the dealer receives money?

Whisky men will leap to their feet and shout that if the man wants whisky more than he does his money, then it has been a legitimate transaction. But an unbiased consideration of the transaction in the light of the last principle laid down, will show that it is not a legitimate transaction.

It matters not whether a person thinks that whisky is a fair value for his money. Looking at the transaction from an industrial point of view he has not received a fair value because when he has used it he is not left better off than before using it, which is the test of the value of any commodity. Society looking calmly at a man exchanging money

for whisky, condemns the transaction; for, while ordinarily our desire for a thing determines what we will give for it, and what it is worth to us, in the case of the whisky transaction, society knows that the man himself is not making the exchange with the judgment he uses in other transactions. He is buying an article to satisfy an awakened principle of evil. His sense of value has become deranged, else he would not exchange his real wealth for a commodity that leaves him worse off after its use than before. Scales that weigh incorrectly are not a benefit to industry. Shall it be said that a transaction in which a person exchanges real wealth for a commodity whose every effect is to tear him down and make him a less effective worker, is desirable in our industrial system? Such is not true of the clothing or dry goods transactions. Obviously we have in our industrial life, two kinds of business; one in which the transactions leave both parties to them better off; and another kind in which only one-half the parties, the sellers, in the transactions, come out of them better off.

BUSINESS PARTLY LEGITIMATE.

In that partial legitimacy of the whisky business is found the only semblance of truth that keeps the business industrially alive, and causes men normally sincere, to agree with the whisky men. Undeniably one party to the whisky transaction comes out of it better off, and the industrial world is benefited by his prosperity; but the other party comes out of it worse off, and society is hurt far greater by his adversity. Whenever a business transaction is made that leaves only one party to it better off, it is not

legitimate. One man for some reason has not received a just equivalent for his money.

Gambling for that reason is condemned by society, because it is a transaction in which wealth is transferred from one person to another without one of them receiving anything in return. Wealth is not produced in such transactions because one party is living, not by creating wealth and exchanging it for wealth in another form, but by securing from the other party, wealth for which he gives nothing. The gambler and all persons who live by catering to the evil in humanity, are industrial parasites.

It hurts the industrial world every time one of its members gets into transactions, out of which he comes a poorer man, as indisputably he does in a whisky transaction. Imagine yourself in a saloon. Two men are engaged in a transaction. One places money, representing real wealth, on the counter; the other places whisky, representing nothing but the quality to satisfy a passion, on the counter. The two commodities are exchanged and the transaction is complete. The saloonkeeper has something to show for the transaction, but the buyer, after gulping down the whisky, is poorer by as much as it cost him, and has nothing in its place. The pleasure he received from the drink is not wealth. Pleasure is not a fair value to receive in exchange for wealth unless it leaves the recipient better off after taking it, than before.

The theater, confections and other forms of recreation would all be destructive of wealth as articles of commerce if they did not leave a tangible benefit. Whisky does not. The theater broadens the intellectuality and makes a more efficient worker.

Confections likewise mildly stimulate the senses and so lighten the burdens of labor. But whisky, being a poisonous narcotic in liquid form, has the effect of stimulating the user above the normal, which is undesirable, for man is the best producer when he is normal. Or it may stimulate a person whose condition is below normal, to a point that resembles the normal, in which case, his strength being false, society bears the expense in railroad wrecks or in other catastrophes superinduced by the stimulant. But the deteriorating effect on the physique that follows the steady use of whisky is too well known to need elaboration and the industrial world should look with disapproval on the consumption of anything that will make its workers less able to bear their share of labor.

MODERATION NEVER DEMONSTRATED.

Moderation in the use of whisky has never been demonstrated in all the ages the narcotic has been used. In fact, observation over a wide area and for any number of years will show that where whisky is labelled as anything else than a poison, there will be a certain per cent of the population that will use it to a disastrous excess. It is inevitable and inherent to the nature of the article and to the nature of mankind. Industrially, whisky should be labelled as a poison and allowed to be dispensed only as such, similarly to cocaine, opium and other narcotics in solid or liquid form, because its use as now officially permitted, inevitably results in turning out on society, industrial workers physically weakened and hence less able to perform their part of labor. The final results of using the commodity are complete

incapacitation for service, and society has another non-producing member to support, as well as to pay for all the trouble of controlling the crime and misery that directly follow in the wake of whisky. There is but one conclusion to draw. Whenever the individual understands that he cannot use the commodity without using it to excess, absolute prohibition is the only remedy. A city, when it has been demonstrated that to license whisky will result in a disastrous per cent of its population using it to excess, cannot do otherwise than to withdraw its official recognition from the business of marketing this commodity. Society cannot afford to tolerate any business that annually turns out, from the use of its product, so many thousands of half-effective workers in mills, factories and stores; occupants of jails and poorhouses; and members of miserable families.

LOSSES FROM THE BUSINESS.

If in one transaction, the buyer loses the wealth he gave in exchange for whisky, from getting a worse than useless commodity, it will only be necessary to multiply that loss by the number of such transactions made in the city every day, to find out how much wealth is destroyed by the whisky business. Multiply that amount by the number of days the saloons operate, and the amount of wealth destroyed each year in the city, will be seen.

Industrially, it would be better for the city to throw annually \$500,000 in gold into the river, than to spend the same amount in the saloons. For by such action, the city would only be poorer to that extent, while if it is spent in the saloons, in addition

to being that much poorer, the citizens, individually and collectively, who spent it will be worse off in body, in mind and in morals.

Admitting in whisky transactions, that only the sellers come out wealthier, whisky men will say that at their worst such transactions only transfer wealth from one person to another, and that the same amount of wealth will be in existence afterward as before. Instead of the consumer having the wealth, the producer has it. This, however, is not so and for this reason.

LABOR.

When labor spends its time producing a worthless article, that labor has been wasted. Labor consumes wealth while it is at work, and this consumption of wealth in the process of labor is justifiable only because the result will leave the community wealthier after than before the product was turned out. Logically then, if labor has consumed wealth only to turn out a worthless commodity, its time has been wasted and society pays the costs. Every time labor turns out a commodity that leaves the consumer worse off after its use, than before, its time has been wasted and the wealth consumed by labor in producing that commodity, has been wasted. According to the law of use, whisky is a product of labor that leaves the consumer worse off after its use, than before. When labor produces whisky, it consumes as much time and wealth as if it were producing shoes, but instead of producing a fair value to exchange in commerce, it produces a worthless one. Fireworks are worthless in themselves but are legitimate products of labor because in their use, men are given tangible recreative benefit.

All the labor engaged in producing intoxicants is a dead waste, from the labor that grows the raw material to the men in the offices who direct the business. When all the productive and distributive processes of the whisky business are complete, the finished product is offered to society for sale, and the price society pays for the commodity, pays for all the labor employed in producing that commodity. But in exchange for this real wealth represented by money, society gets in that transaction, a commodity whose every effect is to tear it down and make its members less efficient workers. Society is poorer each day by as much money as is invested in the whisky business.

LIMITED PROHIBITION.

Elaborate safeguards are placed by society around the retail distribution of whisky, in an effort to ameliorate the bad effects of the business. Saloon-keepers are bonded for good behavior, regulations in the management of his business that are not prescribed for any other business except poisons, are enforced; and the governmental attitude of society toward the business indicates that society does consider this business to be different in nature from other lines of business. But these safeguards have never sufficed to accomplish what they were expected to accomplish. Police forces must be 60 per cent greater in communities with saloons than in prohibition cities. This extra force employed to handle the crime and misery following the whisky business, must be charged against the revenue derived from the business. Added to this, the cost of enlarged asylums, penitentiaries, jails, poor houses and re-

form institutions of every kind, the revenue from the business, which is used as so conspicuous an argument to defend it, is not sufficient to pay for the governmental machinery created to handle it. Industrially the licensed whisky business is a losing proposition to the community because society in the end pays for the cost of the evil results of the business

CIRCULATION AND WHISKY.

Circulation of money is one of the mainstay arguments of whisky men. To their short-sighted vision it seems that money spent for whisky is money that otherwise would be hoarded. Money spent right is better than money saved. But to spend money right, the spender must receive a fair value, and this he does not in buying whisky. Instead of making money circulate, the whisky business is one of the greatest forces at work in society today toward the concentration of money in the hands of a few members of society.

When you exchange money for shoes, money circulates because both yourself and the dealer have something to show from the transaction. You have not lost your money. You have merely exchanged it for wealth in another form because you received a fair value. When you spend money for whisky, or in gambling, or in any kind of dissipation, you receive nothing of real value in return, while the saloonkeeper or other party receives real wealth. So that the sale of whisky is a transaction that transfers wealth from one person to another, without one of them receiving anything in return. The only way wealth can be

concentrated is for one member of society to get something for which he gave nothing. Every one of the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in the whisky business each year, in the city, go into the pockets of the men who sell and produce it, and what have the men who bought it, on hand to show at the end of the year? Nothing? No. They have weakened bodies, weakened brains, and wrecked morals. Has industry any right to complain against a business in which the buyers give real wealth for such values? For the same reason, the drug habit is destructive of wealth; immoral practices are likewise destructive of wealth and gambling is no less destructive of wealth and morals, but leave the physique, fairly intact, if these other evils are not attendant.

BUSINESS RESULTS.

Retail merchants could not advocate an industrial step that would result in as much new money being spent among them, as would follow the abolition of the saloons; for there would be no material decrease in population and the vast sums wasted on whisky would be spent otherwise.

SOME BUSINESS OPINIONS.

Business men of high standing express various opinions on the industrial effect of the whisky business, especially bankers, and their opinions are influential. Some of these business men are sincerely convinced that the whisky business is industrially beneficial, while others, if their positions are analyzed, will be found to receive some benefit from the business, directly or indirectly. Bankers are most typical and their attitude is worth analyzing.

Savings banks, in advertising for depositors, try to impress on the public the importance of sober living to get ahead financially. They argue that every form of dissipation destroys wealth and they have no use for the spendthrift. But go to a regular bank that has saloonkeepers as depositors, and you probably will find the banker tolerant of the whisky business. This inconsistency of bankers is easily understood in the light of the arguments previously made. It has been acknowledged that one party in the whisky transaction, the seller, becomes wealthier, while the buyer grows poorer. The bank having the seller—that is the saloonkeeper—as a depositor, has a prosperous customer and naturally looks with displeasure on all efforts made that will result in its losing that customer. The bank having the buyer as a customer sees the money that he should save, being wasted on whisky and concludes that the business is industrially bad. This is not a fight between the two banks for the same money. The savings bank does not object to its customer spending his money on commodities that are fair values, but realizing that whisky is a commodity that reacts on the purchaser making him less efficient, the savings bank condemns the business. The regular bank would derive just as much benefit from the accounts of gamblers as the saloon accounts. It is plain enough that when a gambler gets money, the other party has received nothing in return, yet if the other party receives whisky in return for his money, it has been worse than a gambling transaction because the use of the commodity he received will be infinitely worse than the loss of the money to the gambler.

PROHIBITION AND LABOR.

Labor, whisky men argue, is harder to get in a dry than in a wet town. For that reason they conclude that higher wages must be paid in a dry town than in a wet town. They argue that liberal living conditions (and their construction on the word liberty is no higher than licentiousness) are advantageous to the town because men of wide manners of living can dwell together. In prohibition towns, the manner of living is prescribed to the extent that a man cannot buy whisky from a seller with a municipal license, and so, they say, some of the population will go to more liberal towns. Examination of the movements of population in dry towns will not bear out these assertions. There is a notable improvement in industrial conditions in a dry town because of the absence of workers made inefficient through the use of whisky. The scarcity of a large percent of brawling, pauperized persons in the population, under dry conditions, is a distinct social gain. Those workers who must live dissipated lives will be replaced by workers who can do normal and effective work, and if this should be gained at a slightly higher cost, when the costs of the consequences of the whisky business are weighed, the advantage is overwhelmingly in favor of prohibition. Industrially or socially a community is never hurt by the migration of those persons who will not live in a dry town.

The Beast

In one of the southeastern provinces of Russia, a town nestled among the foothills in comparative prosperity. The inhabitants generally were industrious and their industry had made them wealthy enough to send some of their sons and daughters to the great city for higher educational facilities. Social life was well defined, consequently, in the usual way.

But a strange solemnity overhung this town at certain intervals in the year, when an awful visitation which destroyed property and maimed and killed many of the inhabitants, took place. This calamitous visit of evil had been regular, farther back than the memory of the white bearded old men who had lived to escape its blighting and destructive operation.

In the somber forests that surrounded the town, there dwelt a ferocious and horrible beast that once in every year, visited the town, and wherever he brought his direful presence, fearful physical suffering and often death, followed, while at every step he destroyed the wealth of the citizens.

It was one of the peculiar features of this situation, that the majority of the citizens looked with toleration on this visitation, as more or less necessary, while those citizens who openly endorsed it, said that the commercial life of the town was benefited by it almost to the point of being dependent on the annual visits, for the town's prosperity.

Years and years ago, this beast had made a compact with the original settlers of the town, that per-

mitted the beast to make an annual visit with the privilege of mingling with the inhabitants. In return the beast was to pay in to the town treasury a certain per cent of the wealth he collected in his visits. It was this consideration that caused many of the citizens to tolerate the indisputably evil results of the beast's visits.

From the first there had been protests against the agreement, from citizens who did not believe the town was commercially benefited by the agreement, or from citizens who had had sons maimed or killed. Sometimes wives who had lost husbands from the beast's operations, or whose children were affected, protested, but the town officials always before had said these protests were made by persons who did not have the town's business welfare at heart.

The operation of the beast was in this way: From two large nostrils vaporous gases escaped and whoever inhaled these gases had exhilarating sensations and finally deep and delightful sleep. Always afterward, however, the effects were most depressing physically, but to those who once inhaled the gases, an appetite was formed and frequently a habit was created. Sometimes the inhalers broke the appetite for the gases but every year hundreds either died from it or were killed or maimed in brawls with others who were inhalers. There were laws against inhaling to excess and consequently many families had sons in the prisons. Some citizens boasted that they could inhale the dangerous gases in moderation and that they were not injured thereby, but these were limited exceptions. Young men were among the largest inhalers of the exhilarating gases and it was considered among them as a

sign of manliness to acquire the habit.

To those citizens who held that to inhale the gases was immoral, and who therefore refrained from so doing, the beast was most repugnant. Their protests had never been sufficient to affect the beast's privilege of making the visits. The right to inhale the gases was charged for by the beast at a rate that enabled it to retire each year from the town with great wealth, but the revenue that he turned out of this, into the town treasury, blinded the leaders of the people to the disastrous results of the agreement. With these officials, as with the inhalers, the beast was on most intimate terms, though to those persons who dared to object to his visits, he showed relentless enmity. His influence frequently was sufficient to enable the beast to injure such persons.

Broken-hearted at the fast approaching ruin of her son, from inhaling the gasses, a mother appeared before the town officials and implored them to stop the beast's visits. They told her firmly that her son should have sufficient control of himself not to inhale intemperately and that it would ruin the town commercially to lose the revenue the beast paid into the treasury, or to lose the stimulation his visits had on the circulation of money.

Swooning with anguish the woman asked as she turned sorrowfully away, "When will men learn that there is something more valuable than money; the heart-ache caused one mother by this business is enough to condemn it forever."

Interested as they were in the town's welfare, the officials nevertheless were touched by this spectacle of sorrow, but for the good of the town, they

would not agree to advocate the cessation of the beast's visits.

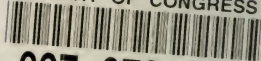
But gradually a stern feeling that this thing was destructive to the town commercially, and degrading to its citizens physically and morally, was growing up in the town. Citizens with this view banded together for the sake of strength and began a policy of agitating against the contract with the beast. "We believe that this agreement between the town and the beast is robbing us annually of all the wealth paid to it by the victims of its visits; but even if this is not true, we will not tolerate it longer, if to do so, means the piling up of so much misery in our homes." With this declaration, they began their campaign.

Long and nearly hopeless years were passed before they could notice that the public was changing its attitude toward the beast, but the idea grew. And while those citizens who were benefited by the beast's visits struggled hard to maintain the agreement, it finally was annulled.

Now in that Russian village the beast has not visited for several years and the absence of stupified citizens from its streets, of fatherless homes, and of the greater amount of crime, causes the citizens to look back upon the years the beast was tolerated, and shudder to think how blind they had been. The city commercially is better off because the citizens do not waste their money inhaling the destructive gases but spend it on things of real worth.

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